The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

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THREE THINGS.

"*There are three things that return not.*"—ARABIAN PROVERB.

Three things never come again.
Snow may vanish from the plain,
Blossoms from the dewy sod,
Verdure from the broken clod,
Water from the river-bed,
Forests from the mountain's head;
Night may brighten into day,
Noon in midnight fade away:
Yet the snow shall come once more
When the winter tempests war;
Blossoms each returning spring
In her laden arms shall bring;
Grass be green where ploughshares run;
Rivers flash in autumn's sun;
Time shall bid new forests grow,
Noon and night both come and go.
Yet, though all thy soul complain,
Three things never come again.

Love may vanish from thy path,
Swept aside by woe and wrath;
Hope may leave thee to despair,
Riches flee like smoke in air,
Home forsake thee, friends deny,
Life itself be fit to die;
But thy love may come once more,
Dearer than it seemed before,
Hope renew its smiling charm,
Riches heap their subtle harm,
Home be built from out its dust,
Friends beguile to new-born trust,
Life revive its joy and pain,
Three things never come again.

Never to the bow that bends
Comes the arrow that it sends;
Spent in space, its airy flight
Vanishes like lost delight;
When with rapid aim it sprang
From the bow-string's shivering twang.
Straight to brain or heart it fled,
Once for all its course was sped;
No wild wail upon its track
Calls the barb of vengeance back;
Hold thy hand before it go,
Think before thou draw'st the bow;
Hurtled once across the plain,
No sped arrow comes again!

Ne'er returns the chance that passed;
That one moment was its last;
Though thy life upon it hung,
Though thy death beneath it swung,
If thy future all the way
Now forever goes astray,
When the instant, born of fate,
Passes through the golden gate,
When the hour, but not the man,
Comes and goes from Nature's plan,
Never more its countenance
Beams upon thy slow advance,
Never more that time shall be
Burden-bearer unto thee;
Woe and want must cry in vain,
Lost chance never comes again.

Never shall thy spoken word
Be again unsaid, unheard;
Well their work thy lips have wrought,
Joy, or grief, or evil thought;
Once for all the rune is read;
Once for all the judgment said,
Though it pierce, a poisoned spear,
Through the soul thou holdest dear;
Though it quiver, fierce and deep,
Through some stainless spirit's sleep.
Idle, vain, the flying sting
That a passing rage might bring;
Speech shall give it fangs of steel.
Utterance all its might reveal;
Give thy tears of blood and fire,
Pray with pangs of mad desire,
Offer life and soul and all
That one sentence to recall;
Wrestle with its fatal wrath,
Chase with flying feet its path,
Rue it all thy lingering days,
Hide it deep with love and praise,
Once for all its course is sped;
None escape it but the dead;
All thy travail is in vain,
Spoken words come not again!

—*Rose Terry Cooke.*

A PERFECT MAN WHO OFFENDS NOT IN WORD.

"If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man."—JAMES iii. 2.

We have no indications of character so full and so delicate, no instrument that acts so instantaneously, that exhibits the lightest breathing of thought and feeling so truly as words. Their "functions are eternal"; the spirit makes through them its most intimate revelations. Many are the manifestations of the hidden man, which reach only to words and tones, which are inarticulate words, and which, if the lips were sealed, would be known only to Him who seeth in secret. Action at the quickest is not instantaneous, and prudence has a moment to take in the wisdom or the safety of giving visible embodiment to passions fluttering in us, or quick shooting instincts of resentment; but words, sounds, lie ready at the gates of feeling, through which they rush at the slightest signal, and betray, without our meaning it, what spirit we are of. The involuntary signs of character are always the truest. There might come to us a warning, sufficiently solemn, when we are told that we shall be judged according to our words,—"That by our words we shall be justified, and that by our words we shall be condemned." Not that this has any reference to him whose eye is not upon outward expression, but on the living spirit; but it may impress ourselves with a more lively sense of the inquisition that God makes into the actual state of the soul. It may help us to make us aware of the strictness and purity with which he *looks within*, when we are told that the utterance of every thought, every sound that feeling prompts into being, goes to make up the evidence which is to justify or to condemn, which is added by the self-registering spirit to that long sum of testimony, the resultant self, which we shall one day read and understand as the retributive product of all our history. Back to the heart's shrine, step after step, the Judge forces us. "By thy works shalt thou be judged." "By thy *words* shalt thou be judged." "A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good; an evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is evil." "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." To such genuine manifestations of ourselves, if we apply the rule that "for every idle word a man shall speak he shall give account thereof in the day of judgment," we shall not be wise beyond what is within, or placing ourselves in the judgment seat, when we say of the men on whose tongues there is no reverence, who can speak lightly of sentiments without which we are poor, ungraced, unhallowed beings, that their words have condemned their spirit; when we say of those who welcome images of impurity and reproduce them in other minds, that, if by their words they are to be judged, by their words they cannot be justified; when we say of those who can deal unfeelingly with what is most intimate to the being of another, whom no sentiment of reserve or of awe restrains when they speak of character, that their unchastened words betray the absence of the self-knowledge that would stay their unhallowed lips; when we say of the things that are absolutely of no real interest to anybody, of the staleness or unprofitableness or levity, not to speak of worse offences, in which many a life does so wearily abound,—that they whose conversation lingers among them are uplifting themselves for that which is the very essence of spiritual blessedness, intercourse with higher natures, communion with God himself!

What a blessed power is that which some minds unconsciously possess of breathing quickening thoughts and feelings into others. A new life goes forth from them: they kindle a new order of ideas, and, without meaning it, change the tone of sentiment in all whom they approach! And this, for the most part, not proceeding from anything extraordinary in their intellectual gifts, but simply from the rich suggestiveness of the earnestness or the playfulness of their moral being. They are true; they are full of real interests; they are self-forgetful; they have never to *make* conversation; their tongues do not run before their hearts. This is the high ministry of words, accessible in a measure to all genuine natures.

Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. Still, after everything has been done in the way of instruction, of large interests and pursuits, of great and responsible employments that open and enrich our nature and place our powers upon the stretch, without which no man knows what he is or what God has given him, even the pure heart must place its freedom under the eye of a fine, sympathetic discernment; nor can we ever dispense in this matter with a religious principle of control. "If any man among you seem to be religious and bridleth not his tongue, that man's religion is vain." We cannot, and we ought not if we could, live to ourselves, and keep free from the troubles, the disorders, the pas-

sions, the perversities of the human beings around us. Our thread of life gets tangled, crossed, and knotted, by the lives of others, guard it as we may; our thoughts and hours are not our own, to keep their currents quiet in channels of our choosing; there is never wanting something to disturb from its balance an unchastened heart, a self-adjusted mind; there are thwartings, untoward accidents, threatened interests, inopportune visitations, defeated plans, spoiled arrangements, under which mere temper will never keep its place. And who can move among these things in cheerful wisdom, with a meek, a strengthening, a pacifying voice, and offend not in word, if unguarded, unprompted by the inward chastener and judge, warning us to "know what spirit we are of"?

So much depends on tones of voice, the subduing, elevating power of natural language informed by the heart, that the evidences of our Lord's use of speech, as that of the Perfect Man, could not fully be reported. Yet ample and memorable are the suggestive testimonies, not alone in altitudes of his which we cannot assume. "He spake as one having authority." "He spake as never man spake,"—but also in the magic charm which is purest issue of the life within, and in our measure open to us all. "And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth."—*John Hamilton Thom.*

THE STILL HOUR.

FOR JUST ONE DAY.

If I could live to God for just one day,
One blessed day, from rosy dawn of light
Till purple twilight deepened into night,—
A day of faith unfaltering, trust complete,
Of love unfeigned and perfect charity,
Of hope undimmed, of courage past dismay,
Of heavenly peace, patient humility,
No hint of duty to constrain my feet,
No dream of ease to lull to listlessness,
Within my heart no root of bitterness,
No yielding to temptation's subtle sway,—
Methink, in that one day would so expand
My soul to meet such holy, high demand
That never, never more could hold me bound
This shrivelling husk of self that wraps me round.
So might I henceforth live to God alway.

—*Susan H. Gammons.*

Great battles are really won before they are actually fought. To control our passions, we must govern our habits, and keep watch over ourselves in the small details of every-day life.—*Sir John Lubbock.*

The fittest and most practicable place for the conquest of anger, selfishness, impatience, is a man's own home. Be a saint there: it does not matter so much what you are elsewhere.—*Mozoomdar.*

Oh, do not let us wait to be just or pitiful or demonstrative toward those we love until they or we are struck down by illness or threatened with death! . . . Oh, be swift to love! Make haste to be kind!—*Amiel's Journal.*

Alas! what reason have we to think any other station in the universe more sanctifying than our own? There is none, so far as we can tell, under the more immediate touch of God, none whence sublimer deeps are open to adoration, none murmuring with the whisper of more thrilling affections or ennobled as the theatre of more glorious duties. . . . Those to whom the earth is not consecrated will find their heaven profane.—*James Martineau.*

Thine own self-will and anxiety, thy hurry and labor, disturb thy peace, and prevent Me from working in thee. Look at the little flowers in the serene summer days: they quietly open their petals, and the sun shines into them with his gentle influences. So will I do for thee, if thou wilt yield thyself to Me.—*Selected.*

O God, who makest cheerfulness the companion of strength, but apt to leave us in time of weakness, we humbly beseech thee that if, for our unworthiness or in thy sovereign wisdom, thou sendest tribulation, yet for thy mercy's sake deny us not the comfort of patience. Thou wilt not lay more upon us than thou wilt enable us to bear; but, since the fretfulness of our spirits is more hurtful than the heaviness of our burden, grant us that inner calmness which comes when we feel thee with us, and give us grace to own that thou doest all things well. Amen.—*R. Crompton Jones.*

The rest of Christ is not that of torpor, but of harmony. It is not of refusing the struggle, but conquering in it; not resting from duty, but finding rest in duty.—*F. W. Robertson.*

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB

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REQUESTS.

Those who write to us for the first time must send the name and address of a minister as a reference. Without that the request will not be printed.

W. E. Staines, Granite Falls, North Carolina, would very much appreciate good reading. Current numbers of the *Argosy* especially desired.

The Editor would be glad to receive copies of the *Cheerful Letter* for May, 1896, and March, 1893. Send directly to Miss L. Freeman Clarke, 91 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston, Mass.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.*

MORAL DISCIPLINE IN A SCHOOL.

The particular methods by which the teacher is to interest the pupils in his plans for their improvement cannot be fully described here. In fact, it does not depend so much on the methods he adopts as on the view which he himself takes of these plans,

* Although called "The Mothers' Council," we often print in this section articles useful for teachers or for any one who has the care of children.

and the *tone and manner in which he speaks of them to his pupils.*

A teacher, for example, perhaps on the first day of his labors in a new school, calls a class to read. They pretend to form a line, but it crooks in every direction. One boy is leaning back against a desk; another comes forward as far as possible, to get near the fire; the rest lounge in every position and in every attitude. John is holding up his book high before his face, to conceal an apple, from which he is endeavoring to secure an enormous bite; James, by the same sagacious device, is concealing a whisper which he is addressing to his next neighbor; and Moses is seeking amusement by crowding and elbowing the little boy who is unluckily standing next him.

"What a spectacle!" says the master to himself, as he looks at this sad display. "What shall I do?" The first impulse is to break forth upon them at once with all the artillery of reproof and threatening and punishment. I have seen, in such a case, a scolding and frowning master walk up and down before such a class, with a stern and angry air, commanding this one to stand back and that to come forward, ordering one boy to put down his book and scolding at a second for having lost his place, and knocking the knees of another with his rule because he was out of the line. The boys scowl at their teacher, and, with ill-natured reluctance, they obey just enough to escape punishment.

Another teacher looks calmly at the scene, and says to himself: "What shall I do to remove effectually these evils? If I can but *interest the boys* in reform, it will be far more easy to effect it than if I attempt to accomplish it by the mere exercise of my authority."

In the mean time, things go on, during the reading, in their own way. The teacher simply *observes*. He is in no haste to begin his operations. He looks for the faults; watches, without seeming to watch, the movements which he is attempting to control. He studies the materials with which he is at work, and lets their true character develop itself. He tries to find something to approve in the exercise as it proceeds, and endeavors to interest the class by narrating some fact connected with the reading, or making some explanation which interests the boys. At the end of the exercise he addresses them, perhaps, as follows:—

"I have observed, boys, in some military companies, that the officers are very strict, requiring implicit and precise obedience. The men are required to form a precise line." (Here there is a sort of involuntary movement all along the line, by which it is very sensibly straightened.) "They make all the men stand erect" (at this word heads go up, and straggling feet draw in all along the class) "in the true military posture. They allow nothing to be done in the ranks, but to attend to the exercise" (John hastily crowds his apple into his pocket), "and thus they regulate everything in exact and steady discipline, so that all things go on in a most systematic and scientific manner. This discipline is so admirable in some companies in Europe, where much greater attention is paid to military tactics than in our country, that I have heard it said by travellers that some of the soldiers that mount guard at public places look as much like statues as they do like living men.

"Other commanders act differently. They let the men do pretty much as they please. So you will see such a company lounging into a line, when the drum beats, as if they took little interest in what was going on. While the captain is giving his commands, one is eating his luncheon, another is talking with his next neighbor. Part are out of the line; part lounge on one foot; they hold their guns in every position, and, on the whole, present a very disorderly and unsoldierlike appearance.

"I have observed, too, that boys very generally prefer to *see* the strict companies, but perhaps they would prefer to belong to the lax ones."

"No, sir." "No, sir," say the boys.

"Suppose you all had your choice, either to belong to a company like the first one I described, where the captain was strict in all his requirements, or to one like the latter, where you could do pretty much as you pleased, which should you prefer?"

Unless I am entirely mistaken in my idea of the nature of boys, it would be difficult to get a single honest expression of preference for the latter. They would say, with one voice:—

"The first."

"I suppose it would be so. You would be put to some inconvenience by the strict commands of the captain, but then you would be more than paid by the beauty of regularity and order which you would all witness. There is nothing so pleasant as regularity, and nobody likes regularity more than boys do. To show this I should like to have you now form a line as exact as you can."

After some unnecessary shoving and pushing, increased by the disorderly conduct of a few bad boys, a line is formed. Most of the class are pleased with the experiment, and the teacher takes no notice of the few ex-

ceptions. The time to attend to *them* will come by and by.

"Hands down." The boys obey.

"Shoulders back."

"There,—there is a very perfect line. Do you stand easily in that position?"

"Yes, sir."

"I believe your position is the military one, now, pretty nearly, and military men study the postures of the human body for the sake of finding the one most easy; for they wish to preserve as much as possible of the soldiers' strength for the time of battle. I should like to try the experiment of your standing thus at the next lesson. It is a very great improvement upon your common mode. Are you willing to do it?"

"Yes, sir," say the boys.

"You will get tired, I have no doubt. In fact, I do not expect you will succeed the first day very well. You will probably become restless and uneasy before the end of the lesson, especially the smaller boys. I must excuse it, I suppose, if you do, as it will be the first time."

By such methods as these, the teacher will certainly secure a majority in favor of his plans. But perhaps some experienced teacher, who knows from his own repeated difficulties with bad boys what sort of spirit the teacher of district schools has sometimes to deal with, may ask, as he reads this:—

"Do you expect that such a method as this will succeed in keeping your school in order? Why, there are boys in almost every school whom you could no more coax into obedience and order, in this way than you could persuade the north-east wind to change its course by reasoning."

I know there are. And my readers are requested to bear in mind that my object is not now to show how the whole government of the school may be secured, but how one important advantage may be gained which will assist in accomplishing the object. All I should expect or hope for by such measures as these is to *interest and gain over to our side the majority.* What is to be done with those who cannot be reached by such kinds of influence I shall endeavor presently to show. The object now is simply to gain the *majority*, to awaken a general interest, which can be made effectual in promoting your plans, and thus to narrow the field of discipline by getting those right who can be got right by such measures.—*Jacob Abbott, in "The Teacher."*

Never cherish a thought of which thou oughtest to be ashamed; never utter a word for which thou wouldst have to ask God's pardon.—*Persian.*

BIRD CORRESPONDENCE.

["Mack the Parrot," gratified at the interest shown in his article last month, has consented to send us several more biographical anecdotes. He has requested his friend Miss Knowlton to write for him these little sketches, as, unfortunately, though probably quite capable of holding a pen, he has never learned to write. Miss Knowlton has the privilege of living in the same house with Mack, and has consented to send us specimens of Mack's "Table Talk" and of his remarks on various occasions, which seem worth preserving. This month we have a portion of the article sent to the *Christian Register* which was too long to print entire in the *Cheerful Letter*. After this the contributions from this quarter will be original.]

Upon occasion he [Mack] can coo sweetly and musically. Sometimes he sings, with great fervor, a strain which has the sound of a priest intoning a church service in Latin. In the midst of the most impressive utterances he interpolates, in the same manner and tone, these incongruous words: "Dry up! Stop *prières!*"

Possibly he has been reared near a church or cathedral; and, while imitating the service, had been rudely scolded by some rough passer-by in the street. In time he added these words to his imitation of the service, uttering them, too, with earnest and solemn feeling.

One dark November afternoon I came into the room in which Mack was usually to be found, and, wishing to read a bit of manuscript to one of the family, looked around to find the best light in the room. It happened to be at Mack's window, where his cage was always placed upon a small table. I took a chair, and sat down with my back to Mack and the window.

"Well, I like that!" said Mack, in an aggrieved tone.

"I beg your pardon," I replied, turning my chair, in order to soothe his injured feelings, whereupon he began one of his graceful dances, swaying his body to the right and left, as the Spanish ladies do their national dancing.

One year the month of July was unusually cold. Through June our tropical bird had revelled in the summer sunshine and the sweet air. As the cold days came on, he discoursed chiefly upon the weather.

"Mackie's cold! Do you like the cold?" was his continual plaint; and the only way to make him comfortable, in the absence of

sunshine, was to partly cover his cage with a thin woollen blanket, and in very cold and damp weather to let him sit for a few moments near the range in the kitchen. He often asks us to bring his "cover" if he is at all cold.

When he first came to us, I would sometimes carry his night "cover" to the piazza, and freshen it in the fine morning air and sunshine. The first time I did this, he called out, in alarm, "Where are you going with my coat?"

In the long evenings of the country we miss the musical attractions of the city, and so introduce home music, singing, piano, or guitar. Our music is keenly enjoyed by the parrot, who expresses delight over his favorite tunes, especially if they are lively and gay. He is fond, too, of sentimental music. To him it comes as something that he likes, but cannot comprehend. He listens with evident enjoyment, but says nothing unless asked. Then he utters a monosyllable, "Um, um!" as much as to say, "Indeed, I do like it!"

As a true son of the tropics, he prefers brilliant and florid music. Among his favorites are Von Weber's "Invitation to the Dance" and Schubert's "Moment Musical." Another is Von Weber's "March of the Bohemians," which calls out from him delicious little squeals of delight, and at times a few strains softly hummed, as if he were trying to memorize it.

One evening we began to play a simple duet arrangement of Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata." The music opens with slow triplets in the bass, low and solemn. This did not suit our gay Brazilian listener, who growled like a little bear, and then reproached the bass performer with "Why! Lou-ie! *Lou-ie!*"

We laughed at him so heartily that it was impossible to continue. Again we tried, but the growls went on, and the "Moonlight" was postponed to another evening. Yet our little critic gladly listens to Beethoven, as long as we avoid this incomparable work.

Not being a trained musician, my "velocity" is often at fault. If I omit a note, or "feel after" one, he sets up a queer little giggle as if he would say, "The idea of *your* trying to play!"

The singing of birds in the apple-trees awakens in Mack a strange mingling of emotions. Early in the season he was delighted; but later came a look of inquiry, as if he were asking himself, "How *do* they do it?"

He can imitate perfectly the cawing of crows and the crowing of the cocks. He likes to open the day by crowing, but prefers that we should ask for a "cockerel." If we neglect to ask for one, he inquires, "Do you want a cockerel?" and then gives a perfect imitation of a cock in the distance.

His fears are few, but they are real. His especial objects of terror are a lawn-mower and a carpet-sweeper.

In color he is of a beautiful green, slightly mottled in the back, with black pencillings. His breast is, in the light, brilliant and iridescent. His face is of a rich yellow, and over his beak is a crestlike arrangement of cobalt-green feathers, very fine and delicate. His eyes are large, and, when he is happy, lustrous. They are surrounded with fine, short eyelashes; the pupil very dark brown, almost black; the iris, amber in hue. The under side of his wings shows a rich indigo, deep scarlet, and a Moorish yellow-green. His "shoulder-knots" are of a brilliant, rich-toned scarlet, like poppies.

At times he wearies of hearing about his beauty, as when I said to him, "Mack, you are a beautiful boy!" his reply was: "I have heard it! I can't help it."—*Helen M. Knowlton.*

DO HENS REASON?

We are sometimes influenced by a theory or statement which observation may contradict. For instance, the saying, "As stupid as a hen," is a detriment to the appreciation of this humble fowl. I question whether the hen is a stupid animal.

Early last winter, after the cold weather had come, and the frost had stiffened the vines and twigs, one bleak day I saw a hen perched on the stems of a grape-vine which grew on a piazza. She was high above the ground, trying to reach some shrivelled grapes, which still hung upon the vine. She evidently wanted those frozen grapes very much. She edged out on a strong stem as far as she dared. Then she cautiously put one foot on a slender stem, to see if she might trust its strength. Thinking she could, she cautiously brought forward the other foot. At last, by wise balancing, she stretched her neck far enough to peck the grapes. For every grape that she pecked and swallowed, at least three or four fell to the ground; but she persevered, until she took the last one on the bunch.

Then she looked sideways and overhead, to find another bunch, and went again through the same cautious process to obtain it; and again many grapes fell to the ground, as she shook the twigs. The reward was small for the danger and effort required. Thus she moved from place to place, reaching

what she could, and lingering with a disappointed glance at those which she could not reach.

She was now so high up, she scarcely knew how to get down. She did not *want* to fly down, but at last made up her mind that she must.

And down she came. What did she do? Run off to the barnyard? No, she remembered the fallen grapes, and searched about in the cold grass until she had eaten every one.

Then she walked off a little way, and turning, contemplated the upper branches anew, stretching her head this way and that, saying as plainly as language could do, "I wonder if there is any possible way for me to get those grapes?" and, wisely concluding that there was no possible way, she gratefully walked off to join her companions.

How many conditions of mind did the hen evince?

First, *perseverance* in obtaining the frosted fruit. Second, *caution*, in trying the strength of the little stems. Third, a *sense of equilibrium*, in poising herself. Fourth, *observation*, in noticing the fall of the grapes. Fifth, *memory*, shown by looking for them afterward. Sixth, *calculation*, and a willingness to encounter difficulties, if only she could effect her purpose. Seventh, a *sensible resignation*, when she had satisfied herself she could not. Eighth, a charming feeling of content that she had done what she could. A long sequence of mental ideas. Is it true to say that this hen was stupid? She could not have been stupid.

Moreover, two days later the same hen remembered this grape-vine, and by some means, I know not how, got upon the roof above it, where she had a fine survey of the swinging bunches. I doubt whether she reached a single grape by hazarding so much, but she showed that she was not a coward.

J. A.

FRANCES POWER COBBE.

IRELAND IN THE EARLY PART OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

(Continued from last number.)

Does any one ask, was nothing done to ameliorate the condition of that wretched place? Certainly, at all events there was much attempted. Mrs. Evans, of Portrane, of whom I shall say more by and by, built and endowed capital schools for both boys and girls, and pensioned some of the poorest of the old people. My father, having a wholesome horror of pauperizing, tried hard at more complete reforms, by giving regular employment to as many as possible, and aiding all efforts to improve the houses. Not being the landlord of Balisk, however, he could do nothing effectually, nor enforce any kind of sanitary measures, so that, while his own villages were neat, trim, and healthy, poor Balisk went on year after year deserving the epithet it bore among us, of "The Slough of Despond." The failures of endeavors to mend it would form a chapter of themselves. On one occasion my oldest brother undertook the true task for a Hercules,—to drain, *not* the stables of Augeas, but the town of Balisk. The result was that his main drain was found soon afterward effectually stopped up by the dam of an old beaver bonnet. Again, he attempted to whitewash the entire village, but many inhabitants objected to whitewash. Of course when any flood or snow or storm came (and what wintry month did they not come in Ireland?) I went to see the state of affairs at Balisk and provide what could be provided. And of course, when anybody was born or married or ill or dead or going to America, in or from Balisk, embassies were sent to Newbridge seeking assistance,—money for burial or passage; wine, meat, coals, clothes; and (strange to say), in cases of death—always jam! The connection between dying and wanting raspberry jam remained to the last a mystery, but, whatever was its nature, it was invariable. "Mary Keogh" or "Peter Reilly," as the case might be, "isn't *expected*, and would be very thankful for some jam," was the regular message. Be it remarked that Irish delicacy has suggested the euphuism of "isn't expected" to signify that a person is likely to die. What it is that he or she "is not expected" to do is never mentioned. When the suppliant was not supposed to be personally known at Newbridge, or a little extra persuasion was thought needful to cover too frequent demands, it was commonly urged that the petitioner was a "poor orphant," commonly aged thirty or forty, or else a "desolate widow." The word "desolate," however, being always pronounced "dissolute," the epithet proved less affecting than it was intended to be. But, absurd as their words might sometimes be (and sometimes, on the contrary, they were full of touching pathos and simplicity), the wants of the poor souls were only too real, as we very well knew, and it was not often that a petitioner from Balisk to Newbridge went empty away.

But such help was only of temporary avail. The famine came and things grew worse.

In poor families—that is, families where there was only one man to earn and five and six mouths to feed—the best wages given in the country proved insufficient to buy the barest provision of food,—wheatmeal for "griddle" bread, oatmeal for stirabout, turnips to make up for the lost potatoes. Strong men fainted at their work in the fields, having left untasted for their little children the food they needed so sorely. Beggars from the distressed districts (for Balisk was in one of those which suffered least in Ireland) swarmed through the country, and rarely, at the poorest cabin, asked in vain for bread. Often and often have I seen the master or mistress of some wretched hovel bring out the "griddle cake," and give half of it to some wanderer, who answered simply with a blessing and passed on. Once I remember passing by the house of a poor widow, who had seven children of her own, and, as if that were not enough, had adopted an orphan left by her sister. At her cabin door one day I saw, propped up against her knees, a miserable "traveller," a wanderer from what a native of Balisk would call "other nations," "a bowzy villain from other nations"; that is to say, a village eight or ten miles away. The traveller lay senseless, starved to the bone and utterly famine-stricken. The widow tried tenderly to make him swallow a spoonful of bread and water, but he seemed unable to make the exertion. A few drops of whiskey by and by restored him to consciousness. The poor "bowzy" leaned his head on his hands and muttered feebly, "Glory be to God!" The widow looked up rejoicing, "Glory be to God, he's saved anyhow." Of course all the neighboring gentry joined in extensive soup-kitchens and the like, and by one means or other the hard years of famine passed over.

Then came the fever, in many ways a worse scourge than the famine. Of course it fell heavily on such ill-drained places as Balisk. After a little time, as each patient remained ill for many weeks, it often happened that three or four were in the fever in the same cabin, or even all the family at once, huddled in the two or three beds, and with only such attendance as the kindly neighbors, themselves overburdened, could supply. Soon it became universally known that recovery was to be effected only by improved food and wine, not by drugs. Those whose condition was already good, and who caught the fever, invariably died: those who were in a depressed state, if they could be raised, were saved. It became precisely a question of life and death, how to supply nourishment to all the sick. As the fever lasted on and on, and reappeared time after time, the work was difficult, seeing that no stores of any sort could ever be safely entrusted to Irish prudence and frugality.

Then came Smith O'Brien's rebellion. The country was excited. In every village (Balisk nowise behindhand) certain clubs were formed, popularly called "Cutthroat Clubs," for the express purpose of purchasing pikes and organizing the expected insurrection with leaders in Dublin. Head centre of the club of Balisk was the ex-schoolmaster, of whom we have already spoken.

A little incident which occurred at the moment rather confirmed the idea that Balisk was transformed for the nonce into a little Hecla, not under snow, but mud. I was visiting the fever patients, and was detained late of a summer's evening in the village. So many were ill, there seemed no end of sick to be supplied with food, wine, and other things needed. In particular, three together were ill in a house already mentioned, where there were several grown-up sons, and the people were somewhat better off than usual, though by no means sufficiently so to procure meat or similar luxuries. Here I lingered, questioning and prescribing, till at about nine o'clock my visit ended, and I left money to procure some of the things required. Next morning my father addressed me:—

"So you were at Balisk last night?"

"Yes, I was kept there."

"You stayed in Tyrrell's house till nine o'clock?"

"Yes: how do you know?"

"You gave six and sixpence to the mother to get provisions?"

"Yes, how *do* you know?"

"Well, very simply. The police were watching the door and saw you through it. As soon as you were gone, the Club assembled there. They were waiting for your departure; and the money you gave was subscribed to buy pikes; of course *to pike me!*"

I have spoken of our village school, and must add that the boys and girls who attended it were exceedingly clever and bright. They caught up ideas, were moved by heroic or pathetic stories, and understood jokes to a degree quite unmatched by English children of the same humble class, as I found later when I taught in Miss Carpenter's Ragged Schools at Bristol. The ingenuity with which, when they came to a difficult word in reading, they substituted another was very diverting. One boy read that Saint John had a leathern *griddle* about his loins; and a young man with a deep

manly voice once startled me by announcing, "He casteth out divils through—through—through—*Blazes*, the chief of the Divils!"

In Drumcar school a child, elaborately instructed by dear, good Lady Elizabeth M'Clintock concerning Pharisees, and then examined, "What was the sin of the Pharisees?" replied promptly, "*Ating camels*, my lady!"

Alas, I have reason to fear that the erudition of my little scholars, if quickly obtained, was far from durable. Paying a visit to my old home ten years later, I asked my crack scholar, promoted to be second gardener at Newbridge, "Well, Andrew, how much do you remember of all my lessons?"

"Ah, ma'am, then, never a word!"

"O Andrew, Andrew! And have you forgotten all about the sun, the moon and stars, day and night, and the seasons?"

"Oh, no, ma'am! I do remember now, and you set them on the school-room table; and Mars was a red gooseberry, and I ate him!"—*Autobiography of Frances Power Cobbe.*

LETTERS OF A SISTER.

To her Brother, James Freeman Clarke.

NEWTON, May 20, 1839.

My dear James,—Dr. Jarvis kindly came and passed a night here and took a great deal of trouble to convince me that I was wrong in supposing that you had better have left Louisville. I think he failed in making me understand it as he wished, perhaps because I can at this distance more clearly see the reasons why you should leave Louisville than those which urge you to remain. But I am told that you have determined to remain another year and therefore will say no more about it, only that I am persuaded you will upon the whole do right, and that, if you should act as is not good for your interest (temporary), I am sure you will not act selfishly and cannot therefore permanently suffer. Do you remember when you went to Louisville that you adopted for your own that maxim of Goethe which you translated:—

"With a life so long, and a world so wide,
And an honest striving for years applied,
Ever searching, fathoming ever,
Often arranging, finishing never,"

and as Dwight concludes it:—

"Reverence for what's oldest, truest,
Friendly welcome for the newest,
Cheerful heart and purpose pure,
So our onward way is sure!"

And would it not have been more in the spirit of that maxim to have been ready to leave your work there *without finishing* it when you were called away, as I think you have been?

I perceived then, and do still more now, the absolute necessity of yielding to that law which compels us to hurry on and leave much behind us on our way. We are travellers, strewing buds and flowers along the road of life to wither and perish, and we regret this all the while; but Nature is abundant, and the necessity is compensated by our finding fruit in every season and in every place. We are penurious and think that naught of our own precious experience must be wasted. We are like children unwilling to lay aside the bread and butter, though no mere hunger compels us to eat it; but it is as well for us that our Mother Nature hurries us away to rest, and we are as surprised as pleased to find that the repast is ever renewed upon our need. But why preach to you who have acted all this out and out, while I have been stupidly clinging to the thought that every action must have its perfection or be nothing. I have waited and waited with immeasurable patience, thinking all the while, No matter, I will do nothing till I can do all, forgetting that beginners in the art of life must practise and bungle, and be content to do so or never learn to do it rightly. But shall we ever learn the art of life? I am now thirty-one, and that is much, as the Turks say; but I feel like a beginner in everything. It is well, and I am grateful that life so renews itself day by day; but it fills me with surprise. It is true the misty enchantment of morning has dispersed, but life seems fair before me still. A golden sunshine is in the world, and, though its wholeness is broken by some shadows that are all too black, sometimes I lose sight of them, and then they are as if they were not. One cannot at this age enjoy the world with the unoccupied heart of childhood.

There is one reason why you should come here at once as you first proposed, and that is that I am afraid the Allston Exhibition will be closed before the last of August. I shall ascertain at once from good authority and let you know. I would not for much have you miss that.

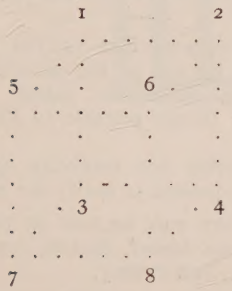
The truly great and good in affliction bear a countenance more princely than they are wont; for it is the temper of the highest hearts, like the palm-tree, to strive most upwards when most burdened.—*Sir Philip Sidney.*

THE AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

[Address everything relating to the Amusement Column to Mr. Henry A. Jenks, Canton Corner, Mass. Contributors are requested to write on one side of the paper only. Write name and address plainly (not necessarily for publication), and send the answers to the puzzles on a separate slip of paper.]

I.

A CUBE.



From 1 to 2 a violent rush of water.

From 1 to 3 a plane figure having ten sides and ten angles.

From 2 to 4 an eliding.

From 3 to 4 a plane figure having nine sides and nine angles.

From 5 to 6 an East Indian flowering tree.

From 5 to 7 the advisory council of the executive officer of a nation.

From 6 to 8 to bring forward.

From 7 to 8 a prickly composite plant of several genera.

From 1 to 5 a flat round plate.

From 2 to 6 a girl's name.

From 4 to 8 a title distinguishing any person or thing.

From 3 to 7 free from adulteration.

II.

CHARACTERISTIC INITIALS.

1. Naturally Belligerent.
2. Winsome Stories.
3. Opposed Cavaliers.
4. Well-Earned Glory.
5. Hit Napoleon.
6. Discovered Lands.

III.

RUSSIAN RIDDLES.

1. I am blind, but show others the way, deaf and dumb, but know how to count.

2. People pray for me, and long for my company, but, when I appear, they hide themselves.

3. I have four legs and feathers, but am neither beast nor bird.

IV.

SOME AMERICAN FAMOUS GENERALS.

1. R—s—c—a—s.
2. —h—r—a—.
3. M—C—e— — a—.
4. T—o—a—.
5. —o—k—r.

V.

SHAKESPEARE PUZZLE.

Answer each question by a title of one of Shakespeare's plays.

1. How shall I season the soup?
2. What do you call this village in which you live?
3. From whom did you buy your Venetian glasses?
4. What howled so fearfully all night?
5. What have you to say of the success of the expedition that began so badly?
6. What do you call a yard for a quart?

—*Every Other Sunday.*

Answers to puzzles in the September Number.

I. James K. Polk.

II. 12. Thanks. 13. Ink.

III. 1. Amazon. 2. Susquehanna. 3. Sacramento. 4. Nebraska. 5. Tennessee.

IV.

E
END
ENTER
DEN
R

V. 1. Boston. 2. Moscow. 3. London. 4. Paris. 5. Quebec.

THE EDITOR'S CORNER.

WHAT HAS A VISITOR A RIGHT TO EXPECT FROM A CHURCH?

The article written by the young woman who "dressed herself plainly," and visited a good many churches, with the object of seeing how cordial a welcome would be expressed by church members and ministers will probably do some good, not precisely in the way it was intended to do good, but by bringing out more clearly and plainly the true object of church going, and what are the rights of visitors and church members. To correct an error it is desirable to have it as fully expressed and discussed as possible.

Several very good articles have been written as comments on the young woman's experience, of which the best that we have seen is, perhaps, the one in the *Outlook*,

pointing out that the fundamental error in her position is the assumption that a church is a kind of clubhouse, and that visitors have a right to expect social attentions.

Several other writers have called attention to the fact that to many persons it would be positively unpleasant and unwelcome, when going as a stranger to a church, to have the minister follow them, insisting on shaking hands, and members of the congregation force themselves on them by speaking to them. Several anecdotes of personal experience have been narrated to us in private. As, for instance, we heard of two young girls who went once to a church in a town where they were living as college students. The minister spoke to them, shook hands with them, and later called on them. They were frightened away, and never went to that church again. Another friend was spending the summer in a town where she did not live, and went on Sunday to a church where she was a stranger. The minister pursued her down the aisle, and she, being a timid person, tried to escape, but felt him "holding out his hand to her back," so that she was obliged to turn and answer. But the situation was unpleasant. She felt as if she were being captured, and it was her last appearance there.

Certainly ministers are placed between Scylla and Charybdis by such articles and anecdotes as these. If they fail to speak to a stranger, they are condemned as inhospitable and unchristian. If they make a special effort to welcome her and make her feel at home they may be regarded as intrusive, and suspected of trying to capture her.

What, then, has a stranger a right to *expect?* No more than a seat, as good a seat as remains vacant. In some churches strangers are not allowed to take a vacant seat until the service has actually begun. This holding of places vacant for proprietors while visitors stand waiting to be seated does seem to show an unchristian attitude of selfish exclusiveness. But it is rarely now to be seen. When the owner of a pew finds a stranger seated in it, a book handed to the visitor with a pleasant expression shows a hospitable spirit and makes her feel at home.

She has a right, in common with all members of the congregation, to *perfect silence*, in order that she may collect her thoughts and be able to receive as much good as possible from a religious service. Sunday comes only once a week. Many persons have little time during the week to attend to their spiritual needs. To deprive them of the only opportunity they have by using the church as a place for conversation is a form of dishonesty. The church is not the place for chattering, and a church cannot be used by a few persons as a club without infringing on the rights of others. Indeed, one thoughtless person may spoil the "still hour" for one or two hundred. This form of selfishness and ill-breeding has become too common, and it would be well to have a sign placed at the door of every church asking every one who enters to keep perfect silence. L. F. C.

IMPORTANT NOTICES.

Hereafter, subscriptions to *The Cheerful Letter* should be sent to the secretary, Mrs. L. B. Porter, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. Make checks payable to Lily Blunt Porter.

Any subscriber not receiving the paper regularly is requested to notify the secretary.

The secretary may be seen at headquarters, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, every Monday, Tuesday, and Friday.

THE ATTENTION OF ALL READERS OF "THE CHEERFUL LETTER" IS CALLED TO THE FOLLOWING NOTICE:—

It is contrary to the rules of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to allow any one to make use of our paper by addressing letters, asking for money, clothing, or other articles, to those whose names are printed in the paper. This prohibition includes requests to borrow money and the offering of articles for sale. The name of any person who infringes this rule will be dropped from our list; and any one who receives a request of this description is desired by our Executive Committee to return no answer, but to enclose the letter at once to our secretary, Mrs. L. B. Porter.

Any minister (of any sect) who receives this paper is invited to write to our headquarters (see address on this page) and give names and addresses of those who may be cheered and helped by becoming our correspondents.

No *theology* is disseminated in our paper. All the religious matter is intended merely to strengthen, cheer, and comfort those in need of such practical help.

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